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SUBJECT: ASAHI INTERVIEW WITH SECDEF RICHARDSON

SUMMARY: ASAHI MARCH 17 GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SECDEF RICHARDSON STRESSING SECDEF'S REPORTED JUDGMENT THAT JAPAN'S DEFENSE CAPABILITY INADEQUATE TO COPE WITH FULL- SCALE AGGRESSION AND THAT JAPAN WILL PROBABLY INCREASE ITS DEFENSE ROLE IN ORDER TO PROTECT ITS ECONOMIC SUPPLY LINES. END SUMMARY.

1. ASAHI MARCH 17 GAVE FRONT PAGE PLAY TO EXCLUSIVE MARCH 15 INTERVIEW BY ASAHI WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT SHINOHARA WITH U. S. SECDEF RICHARDSON UNDER HEADING: QTE U. S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SAYS JAPAN DEFENSE CAPABILITY INADEQUATE, GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO OWN DEFENSE EXPECTED IN FUTURE UNQTE. FULL TEXT OF ASAHI WASHINGTON INTERVIEW APPEARED ON INSIDE PAGE WITH CAPTIONS STATING QTE NO CHANGE IN CHARACTER OF MST UNQTE AND QTE LARGE ROLE FOR OKINAWA UNQTE.

2. ASAHI STORY ON INTERVIEW SUMMARIZED SECDEF RICHARDSON'S VIEWS AS FOLLOWS: (A) BASIS OF U. S. SECURITY POLICY IN ASIA REMAINS NIXON DOCTRINE AND

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ITS OFFER OF NUCLEAR UMBRELLA FOR ALLIES; (B) TO CHANGE CHARACTER OF MST FROM MILITARY TO MERE FRIENDSHIP PACT WOULD INTRODUCE SERIOUSLY UNSTABILIZING FACTORS AND AFFECT INTERNATIONAL BALANCE IN ASIAN- PACIFIC REGION; (C) APPLICATION OF NIXON DOCTRINE TO JAPAN INVOLVES CONTINUATION OF U. S. DEFENSE COMMITMENTS UNDER MST, OF U. S. STRATEGIC NUCLEAR UMBRELLA, AND OF U. S. SUPPORT FOR JAPAN'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN OWN DEFENSES WITHIN LIMITS OF JAPANESE CONSTITUTION; (D) JAPAN'S SELF DEFENSE CAPABILITY, THOUGH IMPROVED IN QUALITY, PROBABLY INADEQUATE TO COPE WITH LARGE- SCALE AGGRESSION BY ITSELF AND WILL PROBABLY EXPAND IN FUTURE IN ORDER TO DEFEND JAPAN'S ECONOMIC SUPPLY LINES; (E) PLAN TO CONCENTRATE U. S. AIR FORCE PRESENCE AT YOKOTA DESIGNED TO FACILITATE OPERATION OF REDUCED FACILITIES AND ALSO TO RESTORE LAND OF HIGH VALUE TO GOJ; AND (F) STRATEGIC VALUE OF OKINAWA BASES WILL NOT CHANGE GREATLY DESPITE REDUCTION OF HOSTILITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

3. ADDITIONALLY, RICHARDSON WAS REPORTED TO HAVE WITHHELD COMMENT WHEN ASKED HIS VIEW OF FORMER SECDEF LAIRD'S STATEMENT TWO YEARS AGO THAT JAPAN MAY IN FUTURE TAKE OVER PART OF FUNCTIONS OF U. S. 7 TH FLEET. RICHARDSON HAS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE EXPRESSED DESIRE TO VISIT JAPAN THIS SUMMER.

4. ASAHI ACCOUNT SAID MOST NOTEWORTHY PORTION OF INTERVIEW WAS RICHARDSON PREDICTION THAT JAPAN WOULD COME TO UNDERTAKE LARGER DEFENSE ROLE IN FUTURE IN ORDER TO PROTECT ECONOMIC SUPPLY LINES AND INTERPRETED HIS REMARKS AS SUGGESTING THAT HE SEES JAPAN EVENTUALLY FACING SAME PROBLEM THAT U. S. NOW HAS OF HOW TO PROVIDE PROTECTION FOR ITS OIL SHIPMENTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST.

5. IN FURTHER COMMENTARY, ASAHI ALSO INTERPRETED SECDEF STATEMENT THAT U. S. BASES ON OKINAWA SERVE AS QTE EVIDENCE OF VISIBLE AND CREDIBLE DETERRENCE UNQTE AS MEANING THAT SCALE AS WELL AS FUNCTION WERE ELEMENTS OF DETERRENCE AND CONCLUDED THAT THIS CONCEPT COULD BECOME OBSTACLE STANDING IN WAY OF JAPAN'S EFFORTS IN FUTURE TO REDUCE LARGE U. S. BASE PRESENCE ON OKINAWA.

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6. COMMENT: AS AN ASAHI EXCLUSIVE, STORY OF
INTERVIEW CARRIED ONLY IN THAT PAPER AND SECDEF REMARKS
HAVE NOT BEEN REFERRED TO BY REST OF TOKYO PRESS. TREAT-
MENT OF STORY IN ASAHI CLEARLY DESIGNED TO CREATE
IMPRESSION OF U. S. ANTICIPATING AND SEEKING TO

ENCOURAGE JAPANESE DEFENSE BUILDUP.

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